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29 FEB 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

FROM: [redacted] (b)(3)

SUBJECT: Recent Chemical and Engineering News Article by Lois Ember on "Yellow Rain" 8 Jan 84

1. Lois Ember has written the most complete, to date, piece on the USG case for "toxin" warfare based on many interviews... including a backgrounder with myself, and many other IC officers. The conclusions are stridently anti-government in general. Specifically Ember believes the "science" done on toxins (not necessarily CW-Use) is bad. Our decision to grant a backgrounder was in hindsight good, because she clearly states the view that classified data exists and was the major element in the judgments we reached. On the other hand, she discounts the data because it cannot be open to public analysis. And she does not report some absolutely critical "pro-government" scientific issues we went to tremendous lengths to tell her about...notably the peer review process we used for the IC estimates in which over a dozen non-USG academicians vetted our data and conclusions and coordinated them prior to publication. Furthermore, she ignores sample data we gave her, and uses that provided by Matthew Meselson, even to the point of not even quoting important statements in flat disagreement to some of his "facts." [redacted] (b)(3)

2. There are, despite accurate statements about non-scientific evidence, some egregious errors and omissions. An example of such errors, which the reporter was told specifically were errors in background interviews:

- o "All US samples contain bee feces or pollen", when she was told only a few do...all but two of which have no toxins.
- o That "food stuffs were not used as controls"...when they were tested and were negative...even from near attack sites where both victims and environmental samples were positive.

[redacted] (b)(3)

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- o "positive samples were tested in only one laboratory and not confirmed independently". In fact, several Non-US labs as well have done comparative and corroborative analyses. Her section outlined "no support from other nations" is flat wrong... And Ember was shown data she chose not to include. She repeats this error several times throughout.

- o The "Southeast Asian Scholars" used to refute refugee reports are not qualified experts, include a member of the Australian Communist Party, and Pathet Lao advisors. Physicians used to refute medical evidence never examined victims.

- o Many U.S. officers, such as Col. D. Lane AARM/Bangkok are so selectively quoted as to be misquoted or quoted out-of-context as to give opposite impressions of what they said or believe.

- o She implies that the U.S. government has falsely spiked samples, or should have known they were spiked by collectors. Absurd.

- o Numerous statements about the presence of mycotoxins in nature are not germane, or wrong. Notable is reference to Fusarium research done at Mahidol University and presence of Fusarium as toxin-producing leaf pathogens.

- o Canadian medical officers are quoted as saying a victim they obtained autopsy tissues from" have a form of malaria"...they actually wrote in a scientific paper that malaria was endemic, the victim probably had malaria, but no pathological diagnosis of manner of death based on autopsy data was possible.

- o No arguments against the pollen and bee feces theory are given in the article, even though Ember had a written analysis negating the "theory" available. Further, she did not fairly report the opposing views even from the palyonologists she spoke with. Pollen studies largely refuting the theory from Southeast Asian scientists and agricultural institutes were not reported at all.

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- o Statements that the reported medical effects do not match known laboratory evidence of human toxicity to mycotoxins are incorrect. The reporter was told of U.S. Army inhalation studies showing the toxins when inhaled are as potent as conventional agents. More importantly, she did not present the independent view of National Academy of Science - National Research Council that said the same, plus statement by the physician - toxiocologists of the NAS who found the toxins were a more lethal agent than mustard gas, and about as lethal as first generation nerve agents, and that the mycotoxins gave the same signs and symptoms as reported by victims.

- o She reported "the Intelligence Community pushed the State Department into making the scientific data public." Ember was, in fact told by State, DoD, and myself that the Intelligence Community reserved judgment on the scientific data, and told the State Department that the scientific data alone did not make the case. In fact, she asked me if it was true, as she had been told, that in 1981, I recommended to the CW Interdepartmental Group that the mycotoxin data could not withstand scientific scrutiny and should not be made public. This was true. But when asked the question, I told her "no comment" since the matter was outside the ground rules of the interview. She chose, apparently, to report the issue as 180 degrees from what others had told her. (b)(3)

3. Paradoxically, I regret to say that although my comments were quoted (when included) accurately, the above examples indicate Ember either chose not to believe me on other points she excluded or neglected to note my statements for other reasons. On the positive side, she appears to have used many of my views on intelligence matters even though, on the negative side, she expunged all references to my prodigious description of the external scientific peer review we used for the SNIEs. Her comments at the end of the interview with me were a harbinger when she told us "material in classified studies didn't exist for her, and she felt no obligation to use our views on any but unclassified data." (b)(3)

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4. Many of the issues identified in the article for improving collection and analysis are valid. They are ones we have already identified, and many of which her interviewees attempted honesty to identify. Credit for this post-audit was not cited. [redacted] (b)(3)

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[redacted] (b)(3)

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OSWR/STD/CC [redacted] (28 Feb 84) (b)(3)

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